

Awareness Sunday Worship Materials

Suggestions follow for those who want to embed the themes of the day in their worship on Awareness Sunday, helping us to move beyond fear and suspicion towards peace and reconciliation, love and awareness, trust and respect.

Search the following sections to find material that may help and inspire you:

1. How to use the lectionary readings (Church of England) in a service of the word or in Eucharistic (bread and wine) worship
2. Biblical readings for use in services of the word
3. Suggested hymns and songs
4. A quarry of prayers – Christian, and from other traditions
5. Acts of remembrance, penitence and reconciliation, dedication, affirmation and thanksgiving

1. Lectionary readings:

Continuous: Exodus 14: 19-31

Emphasise God leading his people to new life, away from oppression and fear to the possibilities of freedom. Acknowledge God charting a pathway for us through the complexity of the last ten years since 9/11. Face the contrast of victory (for the Israelites) and defeat (for the Egyptians) head-on by emphasising that such a way of reading events is inherently dangerous. The rabbinic tradition (earliest reference by Rabbi Johan who died in AD279) offers this telling comment which has come to us in the form of a prayer:

O Lord our God and God of our Fathers, we pray that, in this moment of victory, we may remember the legend handed down to us by our Doctors: that when, after the crossing of the Red Sea, Miriam raised her voice in exultation, and the angels at the throne of your glory began to take up the refrain, you rebuked them, saying: "What! My children are drowning, and you would sing?"

Explore the all-too-human desire for revenge, to see not just evil vanquished but evil-doers receive their come-uppance (which is often different to justice). Think back over the last ten years to key moments – like the execution of Saddam Hussein or the death of Osama Bin Laden – when less than temperate language from some who hold religious convictions did not seem to enhance but to diminish the quest for peace.

Psalm 114/ Canticle Exodus 15: 1b-11, 20, 21

In relation to the psalm emphasise the idea that the songs we sing about our faith often tell more people about its true character than a lifetime of sermons. Note in relation to the psalm that a note of victory and celebration is tempered by the awe with which people are to "tremble at the presence of God". All that we do in the world is to acknowledge and point to his glory, his ability to transform the hardest situations – the rock – into a spring of water. How can we work to ensure such "streams in the desert?" In relation to the Exodus canticle – with its strong narrative recall of the freedom from Egypt – emphasise the way in which people of faith and goodwill can come together to defeat evil and sing a common song of the victorious. Recognise that sometimes people are tempted to 'sing songs' against other faiths which

caricature them on the basis of their 'worst' not their 'best' adherents, and diminish our ability to defeat evil and work for peace.

Related: Genesis 50: 15-21, Psalm 103: [1-7], 8-13

The Joseph saga in the Hebrew Bible is one of the most embracing. Almost every emotion experienced in any family is to be found within it – from jealousy to outright hostility, from favouritism to forgiving love. This passage reveals the nature of the true leadership required of Christians – and people of goodwill – in relation to evil. Is the cycle of hurt and oppression to continue, or will someone break it. Note the power differential. Joseph's brothers are afraid because he has power over them, and could – presumably – use this to punish them – justly – for their treatment of him. But he correctly attributes power to God and uses his position to banish fear. God he says will use the situation for good. Reflect on whether and how we have responded to the events of 9/11 in this 'Christ-like' way. What might be small steps we could take towards asserting or reasserting such a paradigm of leadership.

Romans 14: 1-12

This Pauline text emphasises God-centredness. In the context of the disputes about what is appropriate eating practise it is God who is to judge. We have to be careful about the judgements we make of others. We are not to judge or despise others but to see all life in the context of accountability to God. This offers opportunity to reflect on the sort of commentary that has often characterised the last ten years in public discourse – which has at times been one of blame whilst suggesting the opposite. How might Christians work with people of goodwill to promote a sense of accountability to God for the way we live?

Matthew 18: 21-35

The theme of forgiveness may pose the greatest challenge to those leading worship or preaching on a day such as this one since much Christian reflection on forgiveness presupposes repentance, and in relation to the events of 9/11 there do not appear to have been any expressions of contrition from the perpetrators and their supporters. How then can what happened be forgiven? This raises very difficult issues between faiths since the models of forgiveness are very different. Jews and Muslims, for instance, may very clearly wish to assert that only the 'victims' may forgive the perpetrators and, furthermore, that since restitution needs to be made by the perpetrators to the 'victims' – and since this is not possible since so many of the latter (and some of the former) died, forgiveness within religious categories is not possible. The Christian tradition similarly emphasises the need for repentance – and, at times, for restitution (witness the call to Zacchaeus to pay back four-fold what he took in taxes). But as this passage emphasises – and as the parable of the Prodigal Son extends further – there is also unequivocal teaching on that free, unmerited forgiveness which is, if you like, pre-emptive. It does not presume repentance or restitution. It recognises that a situation of immense complexity and dysfunction may perhaps only be addressed by what appears to be a 'super-human' attempt to forgive in the sense of beginning anew. This is not easy territory. Believers mustn't be made to feel that there is a compulsion to forgive where they have not reached the point in their journey where they are able to forgive. But the challenge to walk a pathway to

forgiveness 'from the heart' remains – Father, forgive them for they know not what they do; forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

2. Further biblical readings

The following readings emphasise different themes for Awareness Sunday:

Deuteronomy 30: 15-19 Choose life not death

Lamentations 3: 20-26 Saving hope for the grieving

Isaiah 2: 2-5 Meeting at the holy mountain to share a vision of peace

Isaiah 11: 1-9 or Micah 4: 1-5 The holy mountain as place of reconciliation

Isaiah 65: 17-25 A vision of peace

Micah 6: 6-8 The common journey 'in God' that all are to walk, characterised by tenderness and justice

Psalms 10 The reality of evil and oppression leads to a call for God to 'arise' and an acknowledgement of divine justice for innocent victims

Psalms 23 God as comforter for those who mourn

Psalms 46 When the nations are in uproar the stillness of God's voice is needed

Psalms 121 Reliance on God for our 'going out' and 'coming in'

Psalms 122 A vision of peace for all within the holy city

Psalms 133 A call to live in unity and fellowship

Matthew 5: 1-12 Blessed are those who mourn, those who make peace, those who suffer persecution

Matthew 11: 28-30 Rest for the weary

Luke 6: 27-38 Love your enemies

Luke 17: 11-19 The grateful outsider

John 14: 25-31 The promise of peace

2 Corinthians 5: 14-21 The ministry of reconciliation entrusted to us

James 3: 13-18 Wisdom and understanding promote peace

Romans 8: 31b-39 Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus

Revelation 21: 1-6, 22:1-5 A vision of all things new

3. Suggested hymns and songs

Hymns and songs from *Common Praise (CP)*, *Lambeth Praise (LP)*, *Sing Praise (SP)* and *New English Hymnal (NEH)* which suit the Lectionary readings as well as the Awareness Sunday themes include:

Exodus 14: Lead us heavenly Father NEH 393; O God our help in ages past NEH 417; Guide me O thou great redeemer NEH 368 (also echoes Ps 114)

Psalms 114: Be still for the presence of the Lord CP383

Romans 14: All my hope on God is founded NEH 333

Matthew 18: Amazing grace CP 375; Dear Lord and Father of mankind NEH 353; God is love: let heaven adore him NEH 364; Make me a channel of your peace CP 519; Forgive our sins as we forgive NEH 66; Great is thy faithfulness SP 276; Lord make us servants of your peace SP 290

Further hymns or songs reflecting the themes of Awareness Sunday include:

A new commandment LP 149

Be still my soul CP384
Beauty for brokenness SP 237
Brother, sister, let me serve you SP 263
By gracious powers so wonderfully sheltered SP 264
Earth's fragile beauties SP 271
Father, hear the prayer we offer NEH 357
For the healing of the nations LP 128
God of freedom, God of justice LP 129
Like a mighty river flowing SP 288
Lord of all hopefulness NEH 239
O healing river LP 139
Nothing can ever come between us and the love of God SP 328
Put peace into each other's hands SP 251
Sing of the Lord's goodness SP 309
The kingdom of God is justice and joy LP 143
There's a wideness in God's mercy SP 316
We cannot measure how you heal NEH 145
Who can sound the depths of sorrow SP 258

Additional hymns, authors as noted:

Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?
The Blood of Jesus whispers peace within.

Peace, perfect peace, by thronging duties pressed?
To do the will of Jesus, this is rest.

Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging round?
On Jesus' bosom naught but calm is found.

Peace, perfect peace, with loved ones far away?
In Jesus' keeping we are safe and they.

Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown?
Jesus we know, and he is on the throne.

Peace, perfect peace, death shadowing us and ours?
Jesus has vanquished death and all its powers.

It is enough: earth's struggles soon shall cease,
Jesus call us to heavens perfect peace.

Edward H Bickersteth (1825-1906)

People draw near to God in their distress,
pleading for help and begging peace and bread,
rescue from guilt and sickness, nearly dead.
Christian or not, all come in helplessness.

People draw near to God in his distress:
find him rejected, homeless, without bread,
burdened with sin and weakness, nearly dead.
Christians stand with God in his wretchedness.

And God draws near to people in distress,
feeding their souls and bodies with his bread;
Christian or not, for both he's hanging dead,
forgiving, from the cross, their wickedness.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-45) translated Alan Gaunt (b 1935)

Turn, human turn, forswear thy foolish ways,
Old now is earth, and none may count her days,
Yet thou her child, whose head is crowned with flame,
Still wilt not hear thine inner God proclaim:
Turn, human turn, forswear thy foolish ways.

Earth might be fair, her children glad and wise.
Age after age their tragic empires rise,
Built while they dream and in that dreaming weep.
Would we but wake from out our haunted sleep,
Earth might be fair, her children glad and wise.

Earth shall be fair and all her people one;
Nor till that hour shall God's whole will be done.
Now, even now, once more from earth to sky
Peals forth in joy the old undaunted cry:
Earth shall be fair and all her folk be one.

Clifford Bax (1886-1962) adapted

**Further suggestions are contained in Issue 56, 3 July-25 September 2011 of
Sunday by Sunday, the Royal School of Church Music guide for all who plan
and lead worship pages 40-41**

4. A quarry of prayers

**A Prayer of John Henry Newman chosen by the families of the British victims
of 9/11 for the memorial service in Westminster Abbey, November 2001:**

O Lord, support us all the day long of this troublesome life, until the shadows
lengthen and the evening comes; the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over
and our work is done. Then Lord, in thy mercy, grant us safe lodging, a holy rest, and
peace at the last, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

A Prayer of GA Cleveland Shrigley (adapted):

Father of all, free us from prejudice born of hate and fear and kept alive by ignorance
and pride. Open our hearts and minds to new friendships and new contributions of
the spirits from peoples, cultures and religions not our own. Enrich us by the great
thoughts and experiences of all peoples and countries. With all your children on earth

make us sharers of your abundant life and workers together in your kingdom of love and peace.

A Prayer of Alan Warren

Lord Christ, shine upon all who are in the darkness of suffering or grief; that in your light they may receive hope and courage, and in your presence may find their rest and peace; for your love's sake.

A passage by Henry Van Dyke (1852–1933)

American Author and Clergyman

Time is too short for those who wait
Too swift for those who fear.
Too long for those who grieve,
Too short for those who rejoice.
But for those who love, time is eternity.

A prayer for responsiveness by Canon Chris Chivers:

Transforming God:
take my anger,
and make of it a well-spring of compassion
for the bereaved and distressed;
take my revulsion,
and make of it a burning desire to overcome wickedness;
take my incomprehension,
and make of it an open channel
through which I may see the realities of evil;
take my pity,
and make of it a source of remembrance;
take my despair,
and make of it a fountain of hope:
Turn me, O God, from indifference and apathy
that I may work to ensure that never again
will the sanctity of human life
be destroyed in this – or any – way.

Prayer written by an unknown prisoner in the Ravensbrück Concentration Camp and found on a piece of wrapping paper in the camp near the body of a dead child

O Lord, remember not only the men and women of good will but also those of evil will. But do not remember all the suffering they have inflicted upon us; remember the fruits we have borne thanks to this suffering – our comradeship, our loyalty, our humility, our courage, our generosity, the greatness of heart which has grown out of all this; and when they come to the judgement, let all the fruits that we have borne be their forgiveness.

An Elizabethan Prayer for our enemies

Most merciful and loving Father,
We beseech thee most humbly, even with all our hearts,
To pour out upon our enemies with bountiful hands whatsoever things thou knowest may do them good
And chiefly a sound and uncorrupt mind,
Where-through they may know thee and love thee in true charity and with their whole heart,
And love us, thy children, for thy sake.
Let not their first hating of us turn to their harm,

Seeing that we cannot do them good for want of ability.
Lord, we desire their amendment and our own.
Separate them not from us by punishing them,
But join and knot them to us by thy favourable dealing with them.
And, seeing we be all ordained to be citizens of the one everlasting city,
Let us begin to enter into that way here already by mutual love,
Which may bring us right forth thither.

Two Prayers of Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) from *Gitanjali* (1912):

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of
dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever widening thought and action:
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

This is my prayer to thee, my Lord.
Strike, strike at the root of penury in my heart;
give me the strength lightly to bear my joys and sorrows;
give me the strength to make my love fruitful in service;
give me the strength never to disown the poor or bend the knees before insolent
might;
give me the strength to raise my mind high above daily trifles;
and give me the strength to surrender my strength to thy will with love.

Two prayers of Imam Abdul Rasied Omar

Most Holy God,
you sometimes use sin and suffering – and turn it to good;
you have united people of faith against evil and helped us to work for justice, despite
our prejudices;
you hold all people in your love and draw us towards you:
free us from our sinful desire to dominate others;
free us from arrogance and prejudice;
make us one in our struggle against humanity and poverty;
forgive those who have encouraged division between people of faith.
May the united actions that we continue to undertake, be their forgiveness.

* * *

God, most compassionate, dispenser of all grace: as we call to mind the many
victims of violence, hatred and revenge in our age, we implore you to comfort the
hearts of all who are lonely or distressed. From what we have witnessed or endured,
grant us a greater empathy for the suffering of innocent victims of whatever
nationality or religion. All wise and Almighty God, grant our leaders wisdom that they
may use their power for the good of all and to fashion a more just and caring world.
God, who art Peace, grant us to live in the embrace of thy peace.

More prayers for peace

Intercessions for use at a gathering of many faiths

Worship leader: Let us pray.

As the representatives of faith communities and traditions which have shaped the history of our planet, and whose beliefs and aspirations reach every corner of the globe, let us in silence bring ourselves to that place of stillness, of peace and wholeness. And let us make this peace our desire for all the world.

A brief silence is kept.

In sorrow, let us pray for those places where there is no peace, for all who suffer as a result of violence and discord.

A brief silence is kept.

In penitence, let us reflect on the destructiveness of ancient enmity and bitterness which persists in the conflicts of our day.

A brief silence is kept.

In hopefulness, let us promise to overcome all that still separates us from one another, to recognise and to draw out the best from our respective traditions.

A brief silence is kept.

In friendship, let us commit ourselves to bring healing and transformation to the world, and to foster a common vision of peace.

A brief silence is kept.

God of mystery, beyond our imagining, we praise and thank you for those of every faith tradition, named and unnamed, for the diversity and richness of our spiritualities, for our common quest for truth, our yearning after love, our longing for peace and our commitment to justice. Ever unite us, we pray, help and inspire us, that we may live solely to give you glory and for the good of our neighbours, now and always. **Amen.**

The worship leader may add: So let us pray God's blessing of peace upon the whole world as we say together: **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.**

A Prayer of Sister Frances Dominica, Founder of Helen and Douglas Houses in Oxford:

Almighty God, Creator of the universe,
I feel small and helpless
In the face of the atrocity and terror and war
I offer you the only thing I can –
My ordinary, everyday life.
I ask you to take it into your hands
And to use it to bring peace.
I do not ask to understand
But only to accept that you need very little
In order to do much,
For you once fed five thousand hungry people
With five loaves and two fish,
The gift of one small boy.

for a spirit of understanding

Ever-loving God, we bring before you the deep tensions and divisions of our world: the desire of some to dominate, the willingness of others to resort to violence, the misery of those whose lives are blighted by fear, suffering, grief and sorrow. Set in our hearts, we pray, a spirit which will draw us together in understanding, unite us in friendship, and finally establish the transforming power of your reign over all the earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

for the promotion of all that is good

Almighty and ever gracious God, you have made each of us to reveal the image and likeness of your glory: teach us to reverence and cherish this gift of life: by offering ourselves as temples of your Holy Spirit by protecting and promoting all that is gracious and good and by opposing all that degrades or destroys our humanity that justice and peace may prevail and the whole world be transfigured by the light of your love, now and always.

for an end to fear

Loving God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, and no strength known but the strength of love: so guide and inspire, we pray, the labours of those who seek to establish righteousness and peace in the world, that all people may find their security, not in force of arms, but in that perfect love which casts out fear, and in the fellowship revealed to us in your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

That pride may diminish and humility increase

Heavenly Father, be with us in our search for peace, in ourselves and in the world you have made: Following the example of your saints, help us to diminish pride and increase humility; to weaken suspicion and nourish trust; to deepen love and understanding in every heart, and unite us all as members of the human family. So may your kingdom come and your will be done, both now and always.

After a speech of Martin Luther King

O Almighty God you have called us to dream that people of all races will join hands together as sisters and brothers and transform the jangling discords of the nations into a beautiful symphony of love and brotherhood: grant us to strive for that day when freedom will ring from every hill and mountainside, and all God's children shall see the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ.

A prayer of St Francis of Assisi

Lord make us instruments of your peace: where there is hatred let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love: for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

A prayer of Eric Abbott

Lord Jesus Christ who hast made peace by the blood of thy cross and now ever livest to make intercession for us, ever praying that we may be one as thou art one with the Father in the love of the Holy Spirit: bring all those who have been baptised

into thee, bring all those who love thee in sincerity, bring all thy children into one body at the last; for thy dear love's sake.

For an end to boasting and arrogance

Lord of peace, be with those who guide the destinies of the world so that an end may come to boasting and vainglory, and the reign of arrogance dwindle in our time. Give them the courage to speak the truth and the humility to listen. Help us all to put the good of our neighbours above our own ambitions, and the truth which does not profit us above the lie which does. So may we stand upright, freed from the burden of fear and the weight of suspicion, learning to trust each other, for your mercy's sake.

A Prayer of Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Lord Jesus, help us to know that
Goodness is stronger than evil,
love is stronger than hate,
light is stronger than darkness,
life is stronger than death,
and that victory is ours through him who loves us.

for the power and peace of the resurrection

Living Lord, conqueror of death, we remember with gladness how on the day of resurrection you appeared to your disciples in your risen power and said to them, 'Peace be with you'.

Speak that word to the hearts of your children, O Lord.

Lift them above their doubts and fears; and help them so to practise your presence and to rest upon your victory, that your peace may be known over the whole earth.

for peace in church and world

O God, whose will is to fold both heaven and earth in a single peace; let the design of your great love lighten upon the waste of our wraths and sorrows; and give peace to your Church, peace among nations, peace in our homes, and peace in our hearts.

Prayers of Alan Paton for peace

Take all hate from my heart, O God, and teach me how to take it from the heart of others. Open my eyes and show me what things in our society make it easy for hatred to flourish and hard for us to conquer it. Then help me to try to change these things. And so open my eyes and my ears that I may this coming day be able to do some work of peace for Thee.

* * *

Lord, help me to give myself when I am giving. Teach me to give without thought of receiving, and to receive without thought of giving. Teach me not to withhold or withdraw myself. Teach me to hoard nothing: love, money, time, possessions. Make me ready to give, even my life if it is required of me. And while I have it, use it as an instrument of Your peace.

From the Muslim tradition

Oh God,
You are Peace.
From You comes Peace,
To You returns Peace.
Revive us with a salutation of peace,
And lead us to your abode of Peace.

From the Sufi tradition

Send Thy peace O Lord, which is perfect and everlasting, that our souls may radiate peace.

Send Thy peace O Lord, that we may think, act and speak harmoniously.

Send Thy peace O Lord, that we may be contented and thankful for Thy bountiful gifts.

Send Thy peace O Lord, that amidst our worldly strife, we may enjoy Thy bliss.

Send Thy peace O Lord, that we may endure all, tolerate all, in the thought of Thy grace and mercy.

Send Thy peace O Lord, that our lives may become a Divine vision and in Thy light, all darkness may vanish.

Send Thy peace O Lord, our Father and Mother, that we Thy children on Earth may all unite in one family.

* * *

I offer you peace.

I offer you joy.

I offer you friendship.

I hear your needs.

I see your beauty.

Our wisdom comes from
a Higher Source.

Our wisdom comes from
a deeper source.

I honour that source in you.

From the Jewish tradition**by Rabbi Nachman ben Feiga of Breslov**

Lord of Peace, Divine Ruler, to whom peace belongs!

Master of Peace, Creator of all things!

May it be thy will to put an end to war and bloodshed on earth, and to spread a great and wonderful peace over the whole world, so that nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

Help us and save us all, and let us cling tightly to the virtue of peace. Let there be a truly great peace between every person and their fellow, and between husband and wife, and let there be no discord between people even in their hearts.

* * *

Lord of all creation, we stand in awe before you, impelled by visions of the harmony of your children. We are of many traditions – inheritors of shared wisdom and tragic misunderstandings, of proud hopes and humble successes. Now it is time for us to meet – in memory and truth, in courage and trust, in love and promise. In that which we share, let us see the common prayer of humanity; in that which we differ, let us wonder at the gift of freedom; in our unity and differences, let us know the uniqueness that is God, for thy mercy's sake.

From the Buddhist tradition

May all beings be happy and at their ease,

Free from pain, fear, distress or enmity;

Untroubled, well, unharmed, in peace.

A prayer of Mahatma Gandhi

I am a man of peace. But I do not want peace at any price. I do not want the peace that you find in stone. I do not want the peace that you find in the grave; but I do want the peace which you find embedded in the human breast, which is exposed to the arrows of the whole world, but which is protected from all harm by the power of Almighty God.

from the Hindu tradition

Loving Father, perfect teacher, patient guide in these troubled times; sitting with you, the perfect One, I take the influence of your company to teach me the way of reconciliation, wisdom and harmony. I see you, the embodiment of all solutions for the world and myself at this time. Touch my heart and my conscience daily, that all I do will work towards your goal of perfection and peace for all people.

5. Acts of Remembrance, Penitence and Reconciliation, Dedication and Affirmation, and a Litany of Thanksgiving

An Act of Remembrance

At the blowing of the wind and in the decay of autumn;
in the chill of winter and the promise of spring
under the blue sky and in the warmth of summer
we remember them.

At the dawn of day and at the setting of the sun
we remember them.

With joys we long to share and with sorrows we bear alone
in work we have to do and life we have to live
we remember them.

With thankfulness and regrets,
with memories of the past and hopes for the future,
for all that was and all that might have been
we remember them.

By their deaths in 9/11 our fellow citizens added to the sum of the world's innocent victims. As we commend them to God, we remember people from other nations who also died and those throughout the world who are suffering in innocence.

In the faith of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, we remember all of them before God.

Silence is kept

An Act of Penitence and Reconciliation

We turn to God in sorrow as we acknowledge before him the suffering of his world and the pain of his people.

When hatred causes division between nations and alienates peoples and cultures
Lord, have mercy:
Lord, have mercy.

When indifference diminishes the dignity of the imprisoned, the homeless and the refugee,
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

When pride leads us to trust ourselves and to disregard the demands of your word
and your laws

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May God, who has called us to be kind to one another,
tender-hearted, and forgiving of one another,
pour upon us the riches of his grace,
free us from evil, and strengthen us to love
in love and peace with all the peoples of the earth. **Amen.**

Let us then pray with hope for the future of the world:
for peace on earth and goodwill among all people,
for an end to injustice, terrorism and war,
for those charged with building the ways of peace.
God of mercy:

hear our prayer.

For the unity of all Christian people
and for people of faith in every land;
for all who seek God and the way of truth
God of mercy

hear our prayer.

For the healing of memories,
for relief where past wrongs and violence persist,
and for all who are in pain or distress
God of mercy:

hear our prayer.

For the strengthening of the bonds of human dignity,
for the resolve of all whose courage and compassion bring relief,
and for those who day by day meet hostility with restraint
God of mercy:

hear our prayer.

For peace and reconciliation, love and awareness, trust, friendship and respect
among all

That we might discern more deeply our shared humanity,
And for the dawning of a world that is in harmony with itself

God of mercy:

hear our prayer.

O God, look in mercy on the deep divisions of our world. Set in our hearts the spirit of
penitence, forgiveness and reconciliation, that the day may soon come when we no
longer distrust or fear one another, but are drawn together in unity of purpose, in
understanding, and in love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

An Act of Affirmation

The worship leader says:

My friends, I invite you on behalf of your *church/ faith* communities to affirm your
commitment to seeking light mid darkness, hope in despair and love in place of hate:

Each, in turn, says (for example):

From the Roman Catholic Church, I, XXX, a Christian;

From the Jewish synagogues, I, XXX, a Jew;

From the Methodist Church, I, XXX, a Christian;

From the Mosques, I, XXX, a Muslim;

From the Church of England, I, XXX, a Christian;

From the Temples, I, XXX, a Hindu;

From the Pentecostal Churches, I, XXX, a Christian;

From the Gurdwaras, I, XXX, a Sikh;

From the Evangelical Alliance, I, XXX, a Christian;

...

The participants say together:

affirm with my sisters and brothers,
our belief in justice for everyone;
our hope for peace between peoples and nations;
our continued faith in the possibility of a new world;
our commitment to live at ease with our neighbours.

The worship leader concludes:

May God who has given us the vision, also inspire our wills to do all these things.

All say: Amen.

An Act of Dedication

Worship leader:

Let us affirm our desire for peace and reconciliation, our commitment to build a world of love which is characterised by awareness, trust, friendship and respect among all people:

**Lord God our Father,
we pledge ourselves to serve you in serving all people:
in the cause of peace with justice
and for the relief of want, fear and suffering.
Direct us by your Holy Spirit;
that we may become rich in wisdom, courage, and hope;
and keep us faithful to this pledge:
for the glory of your Name,
for our good, and the good of all people. Amen.**

A Litany of Thanksgiving and Recognition

for all those, known and unknown, who responded in love to 9/11

Let us pray for servants of God, known and unknown, who responded with self-giving love on September 11, 2001 and who continued to offer their services in the days, weeks and months following that tragic day.

For their dedication and tireless resolve to answer the cries of those in need.
We give you thanks, O Lord.

For the fire-fighters, rescue squad, personnel and EMT helpers, for police officers and others who placed themselves in harm's way in their efforts to save others.
We give you thanks, O Lord.

For doctors, nurses, and medical technicians, who continue to employ their gifts of knowledge and wisdom in the effort to provide relief, comfort, and healing.
We give you thanks, O Lord.

For trauma counsellors, grief counsellors, pastoral care staff, chaplains, school teachers and guidance counsellors who continue to offer their nurturing support.
We give you thanks, O Lord.

For pastors and bishops, representatives of local faith groups and others who share messages of faith and inspiration for those whose spirits are broken.
We give you thanks, O Lord.

For all public servants who dedicate themselves to the care and safety of your people.
We give you thanks, O Lord.

For those who perished in the line of duty: hear our prayers of remembrance and grateful thanks for their lives poured out for the sake of those in peril.
We give you thanks, O Lord.

For those who volunteered, giving themselves, their time and their possessions to serve whenever they were needed: hear our prayers of remembrance and grateful thanks for their lives poured out for the sake of those in peril.
We give you thanks, O Lord.

Hear all our prayers, O Lord, and unite them with the prayers of all your faithful people both now and in the days ahead. In your great and powerful name we pray.
Amen.